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DE RUEHB #4193 3550829
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3910
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0018
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 0066

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 004193

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PINS BE I2
SUBJECT: Letter from Belgian Attorney Concerning
Incarceration in Iraq of Oussama Atar

¶1. (SBU) Belgian attorney Jacques Bourgaux wrote the Ambassador December 11 to seek information regarding the detention in Iraq of Oussama Atar, a Belgian of Moroccan origin. Unofficial embassy translation of the letter is reproduced in paragraph two. The letter reports Atar as being held by the U.S. when, according to information we have received from a variety of sources, including the Belgian MFA and the Iraqi embassy here, it appears he has been convicted by an Iraqi court for entering the country illegally. USG elements reportedly manage the facility where Atar is being held prior to being turned over to Iraqi custody after his sentencing in mid-January. The Embassy proposes acknowledging receipt of the Bourgaux letter and referring him to the Belgian MFA. Acting at our suggestion, the Belgians are dealing directly with the Iraqis on this matter, both here in Brussels and via the Belgian embassy in Amman, where the Belgian Charge accredited in Baghdad resides.

¶2. (U) Request Department's guidance on answering the Bourgaux letter.

¶3. (U) Begin Unofficial Embassy Translation:

December 11, 2006

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I have the honor to inform you that the family of Mr. Oussama Atar has sought my advice. He was born May 4, 1984, in Laeken (Brussels). He is a Belgian national domiciled in the above mentioned municipality, Place Joseph Benoit Willems, 13.

The person in question left his parents three years ago, and according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, Central Tracing Agency, he is being held in southern Iraq, at the Bucca Camp, a camp controlled by the allied forces.

According to the responsible persons I have contacted at the Belgian Foreign and Justice Ministries, a delegation has been able to contact the Belgian national at the Bucca Camp. It occurs that the Belgian national was first held at Abu-Gharib, and later at the Cropper Camp, before his transfer to Bucca Camp.

The family would like to know the reason for his long (almost three years) internment, and more particularly the charges that have been brought against Mr. Atar.

Finally, your Embassy, by obtaining information locally in Iraq or from the American authorities competent for

this sort of demarche, might be able to indicate to me under what conditions and when the liberation and repatriation to Belgium of Mr. Atar might be envisaged.

His present demarche has a purely humanitarian motivation, and although very concerned, the family has no intention, at this stage, to turn this demarche into a public matter.

Yours sincerely, Jacques Bourgax

END TRANSLATION

KOROLOGOS